



a newsletter for alumni & friends of the baltimore yearly meeting camping program
Teen Adventure • Catoctin Quaker Camp • Shiloh Quaker Camp • Opequon Quaker Camp

2003 Summer Report: Enrollment, Finances & News

by Josh Riley, Camp Administrative Secretary

Before I discuss this past summer I want to take a look ahead and let you all know about some changes on the horizon for the summer of 2004. The camping program is getting a new camper, staff, and alumni database that will enable us to accept **online camper applications**. I'm very excited about this and I hope that many of you will take advantage of this new capability. I think it will be a time saver for families and for me! I'll send more detailed information about this to parents soon. The other change is that we are going to **move the camp application deadline** sooner--to **February 1** instead of the usual March 1. I hope this change will allow parents to better plan their summers. On to this past summer:

Camper Enrollment: There were 580 campers at camp this summer. This constitutes an increase of 14 from last summer due to expanded sessions at Opequon and a slight increase at Teen Adventure. Of this group, 334 were BYM Quakers representing 29 Monthly Meetings. There were 55 Quakers from outside the region and 191 non-Quakers.

We had an 87% acceptance rate. Some Baltimore Yearly Meeting Quakers did not get into camp this summer. All BYM Quakers who applied to or were willing to go to Opequon or Shiloh got into camp. The Teen Adventure waiting list was large and included some returning campers who were unable to get into TA.

Campers came primarily from Maryland (261), Virginia (150), Pennsylvania (59), and the District of Columbia (41). Campers also came from West Virginia, Vermont, Georgia, New York, Delaware, Utah, Arizona, Wisconsin, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Kentucky, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, North Carolina, Montana, Massachusetts, Illinois, Indiana, California, and Connecticut. That's 24 states and the District.

Internationally, campers came from Puerto Rico, England, France, Kenya, Italy, Brazil, Croatia, Ecuador, China, and Indonesia.

Finances: This year, on the camper application, we gave people the opportunity to make a contribution to the Barry Morley Camper Financial Aid Endowment. Fifty-two people contributed a total of \$2,240. Most folks donated between \$25 and \$50 dollars. We are looking forward to growing the endowment even more this coming year!

Campers received \$23,410 in Monthly Meeting Camperships, representing contributions from 14 different monthly meetings. Sandy Spring, Goose Creek and Maury River all make a significant effort to scholarship campers.

We gave out \$41,396 in Work Grants and \$17,352 in Camperships from the Barry Morley Camper Financial Aid Endowment.

The camping program has an operating budget of over

\$550,000. Approximately 88% of this is covered by camper fees. Another 3% is covered by contributions from individuals and Monthly Meetings. 1% is income generated by the Barry Morley Camper Financial Aid Endowment and designated for camp scholarships. The remaining 8% is allotted for work-grants. We raised fees in 2003 by almost 10% mainly to help cover rising property management costs. If you'd like to see a copy of the camp budget, please contact me at Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Briefs: We are planning a Holiday Alumni Gathering which will be held on Saturday, December 27 at the Community House at Sandy Spring Meeting from 2-6 p.m.. Camp staff and former campers (18+) are welcome to attend. We did not have an alumni gathering this fall, but look forward to another next Labor Day, 2004.

In March, we hired Melissa Poole to co-direct Teen Adventure with Whitney Thompson. The other directors, Linda Garrettson, Dana Foster, and Elaine Brigham all stayed on at Catoctin, Shiloh and Opequon respectively. It is a privilege to work with such gifted and grounded directors.

In the coming year, the Camping Program Committee will be holding in the Light questions of accommodating more campers; the role (and growing necessity) of technology at camp—including how to pay for computers, cell phones, and the like; outreach to alumni and opportunities for continued involvement in the programs; and more as Way Opens. I invite questions, prayer and insight from all.

Many of the articles in this edition of *the firecircle* are written by adults and parents; I am reminded of the larger community of people who are involved in the programs, not just the campers. The camping programs are large and touch many, many lives. We serve approximately 600 campers each summer. There are 126 staff members, 30 committee members, and approximately 150 adult volunteers who cook, do maintenance work, and offer medical support each summer. That's just shy of 1000 people and I haven't even *mentioned* parents and guardians, work weekend volunteers, Monthly Meeting level committees that support the camps, or any of the *many* camp alumni who have come through the program during its 80-year history. I feel blessed to be able to work within this large community of commitment and care. I challenge us all to deepen our commitment to the financial, physical and spiritual stewardship of the programs in the coming year.

Inside: Opequon movie-making • Perspectives on cooking at camp • Camp property information • photos from the summer • and more!

Who is on the Camping Program Committee?

Below are listed the members of the Camping Program Committee and Camp Property Management Committee. Feel free to contact them if you have any thoughts or concerns about the camping programs or properties. Call Josh Riley for contact information, or consult the *2003 BYM Yearbook*.

Annie Storr - Adelphi
Ron Akins - Bethesda
Carol Ahlum - Frederick
Greg Tobin - Frederick
Nancy Beiter - FMW
Steve Gilbert - FMW
Marie Stacy - Gunpowder
Jody Hopkins - Homewood
Kevin Caughlan - Sandy Spring
Peter Doo - Stony Run
Lizzie Fetter - Takoma Park
Lois Carter-Fay - Valley
Betsy Krome - Williamsburg
Margaret Krome-Lukens - Wms-

bg

Ex Officio:

Josh Riley, Camp Admin. Sec.
David Hunter, Camp Prop. Mgr
Linda Garrettson, Director, CQC
Dana Foster, Director, SQC
Elaine Brigham, Director, OQC
Whitney Thompson, Co-Dir., TA

Who is on the Camp Property Management Committee?

Mike Alemar, Adelphi
Hank Rupperecht, Frederick
Brian Burgher, Goose Creek
Patti Nesbitt, Clerk, Hop. Ctr.
Alan DeSilva, Sandy Spring
Wayne Finegar, Sandy Spring
Barbara Galloway, Sandy Spring
Jeremy Wright, Sandy Spring
Tom Horne, Takoma Park

Ex Officio:

David Hunter, Camp Property Mgr.
Arlene Rodenbeck, Stewardship & Finance
Ron Akins, Camping Program
Ted Hawkins, Trustees

Managing the Kitchen

by Betsy Krome

After seven years of cooking at Shiloh, this summer I took the plunge and agreed to co-manage the kitchen. I was afraid I would just prove the applicability of the Peter Principle, but my co-manager (Betsy Tobin) and I agreed that probably we would keep each other from doing anything too stupid.

There are so many things I love about being at camp. A simple one is sleeping alone in my tent every night. In a contrast with the quiet nights of the last two, dry summers, this summer's nights brought rushing sounds from the Conway River at the edge of the field. Most nights in the first session also brought the sound of thunder and rain—and, for the first couple of nights, the drip of leaks in my tent. Once I had leak-proofed the rainfly, the sound of rain was like a sleeping pill, sending me right off to a sound sleep.

The river gives us more than lulling sounds at night. We have a couple of swimming places, a shallow one near the bridge into camp, and a deeper series of rocky pools, a five-minute walk through shady woods. My trips to the swimming hole with other cooks have a dreamy, idyllic quality in my memory: the cool water, the warming sun, the birdsong, the companionable

Film-making at Opequon: A Creative Group Process

by Coleman Watts

I had the time of my life this summer leading the movies workshops, and my favorite part about it was that everything was such a collaborative effort. Every workshop began with a brainstorming session where everyone contributed ideas about plot, characters, and setting. The script (when it wasn't ad-libbed) was always written by the campers. I considered my job to be a facilitator rather than a director. The campers provided all the great ideas, and I was just there to help those ideas grow into something everyone could watch and enjoy.

Another favorite part of the experience for me was how *fast* we worked! For example, the musical, including all the songs, was conceived, written, recorded and filmed in a single day! In all the other

chats with workmates, the timeless quality of aimless lazing in the clear water.

And always there is Meeting. Worship at camp has a unique quality. Some of the campers are not Quaker and this is their first experience of Meeting. But when this noisy boisterous camp settles into silence, some amazing messages come out of these young mouths.

These are the privileges of being at camp, but I was there to run the kitchen. It's hard work. Cooking pancakes for a hundred people is just plain hard work. But there's the satisfaction of working with a team of people, and the gratification of having the campers cheer for you when you've surprised them with apple crisp. For me this summer was not only the physical work of chopping and stirring and blending and baking. It was also the mental discipline of thinking about menus and quantities and vendors, and remembering to communicate clearly with the cooking crew—trying to speak clearly and listen well.

My work at camp always stretches me, and this summer it stretched me more than ever. The three weeks were not enough. Next summer I want four.

workshops, we would conceive and write the story in less than an hour, and then film the entire thing in as little as four hours! All the campers stepped up to those time limits beautifully, and everyone was focused, hard working and cheerful throughout the process.

And of course, the biggest reward was seeing how creative, clever, and inspired the campers could be.

The movies we all created together are all much, *much* better than anything I could have come up with on my own. There are some truly brilliant minds at Opequon, and I can't wait to work with them again next summer!

If you'd like to own a VHS copy of all the movies from this summer for just \$14 including shipping, send an e-mail to Josh Riley at the BYM office: joshriley@bym-rsf.org or call 301-774-7663.



Cooking at Catoctin: Reflections from the Summer

by Thayer Cory

It's a sunny Sunday morning in mid-July and I'm driving to Catoctin Quaker Camp. As my aging car huffs up the mountain my excitement builds: A week away from the routines of work and home; A week to sleep in a tent next to a gurgling brook; A week to catch glimpses of my son who's on staff; A week to soak up the love and energy of this place that has been so special to everyone in my family.

By Sunday night I'm totally immersed. There are five of us volunteer moms scurrying around the kitchen, taking orders from Julie, the head cook, trying to get enough baked chicken, rice (white and brown), beans (for the vegetarians), salad, mixed vegetables, milk, water, peanut butter and jelly (for the picky eaters) and various condiments on twelve long tables to feed 120 campers and counselors. It's a scene that will be repeated again and again over the next week, and although my back

will ache from standing for too long on a hard floor, and my arms will ache from mashing a barrel of potatoes, and I will sweat buckets from standing over a hot griddle flipping pancakes, I feel at home.

We gather for Sunday fire circle and after some loud singing and unsettled silence, Linda, the camp director, talks about a grueling cross-country bicycle trip she took after college, and then leaves us with a query about faith. The silence settles. A camper says it was an act of faith for her to come to camp. It had been hard to leave her friends and she was afraid of homesickness. Another voice in the gathering darkness tells us it had taken faith to get through her mother's bout with breast cancer last year. Someone says that faith is an attitude that involves trust and hope. Now there are many voices, all young, sharing their faith stories. When it's time to end, we sing a quiet song and head for bed.

Wednesday is cooks day off. The campers are on their weekly trips and Camp Catoctin is quiet. Most of the other moms live nearby and opt to go home for a night of clean sheets and china plates.

Sara, the nurse, and I decide to hike. We pack water and peanut butter sandwiches and spend the day roaming the Catoctin trail. We talk easily and just as easily lapse into silence. We stop at Blue Lake, which is indeed bright blue. I've had the forethought to bring a towel but no bathing suit, so we skinny-dip in the cool mountain water. Later we bump into two groups of campers. They're glad to see us. They share their gorp. We tell them they're almost there.



That night, as the oldest campers, back from a ten-day trip, noisily cook themselves a feast in the kitchen, I sit on the back porch with my son Damon. We chat about this and that, play a game of cards, share conversation with Sara and Phil, the carpenter. It's an easy, quiet time, and I'm filled with gratitude as I head back to my leaky tent in the pouring rain.

By Thursday afternoon camp is once again the scene of controlled chaos. It rained hard both nights the campers were out, and the clotheslines outside the bathhouses are clotted with soggy towels, muddy socks, T-shirts of unrecognizable colors and sodden sneakers. The nose-twisting smells of mildew, sweat and dampness greet me as I approach. Inside, the girl's bathhouse is filled with giggles and clean faces peering into mirrors and endless comments about hairdos and tank tops. It smells like shampoo.

Thursday's fire circle is loud and exuberant. Linda is attending to camp business, so some of the counselors lead the music. They leap around the circle, shouting and dancing like parched tribesmen celebrating the start of the rainy sea-

son. The campers are bouncing on their logs, screaming and cheering. They're glad to be back.

When silence finally falls, campers are asked to share stories of their time on the trail. There are thanks to fellow campers or counselors who helped in times of distress. There are hilarious and not so hilarious tales of struggle and triumph, wet sleeping bags, and wild blueberries. A girl who'd gone on the service trip speaks of how moved she was by a mentally challenged woman who attached herself to the campers for a day.

Then a 14-year-old boy begins to speak quietly, and the air settles like a soft blanket. It had rained all night, he began. And he hadn't slept much, so he rose before dawn and went to sit on a large rock. He found a fellow camper, another boy, already there. They sat in silence. Several other campers drifted in and before long, five 14 yr. olds were gathered. He had a conversation with God, he said, and it was "the most spiritual experience I've ever had." The sun rose, and after almost an hour, one camper turned to another and shook hands. Meeting for worship was over.

Friday is Christmas and we are in the kitchen cooking pies, roasting turkeys, peeling potatoes, making stuffing. Meanwhile, camp is humming. Each camper, counselor and staff person has pulled a name out of a hat and is making a present for that person. At the end of the day the gifts are displayed on the fraz field—wood carvings, drawings, paintings, a jewelry box made of duct tape, a crocheted hat, a scrap book, collages and a song written by one counselor for another. We stop our perusing to listen. Julie, who's retiring for a second time, has had a canoe named after her and the "Queen Julie" sits in splendor amongst these gifts.

Camp ends with a dramatic ritual for the oldest campers who will not be coming back next year. There are tears and hugs and candles. The sky is pricked with a thousand stars. For now, life is safe and sacred. We will all take Catoctin

Camp Property Projects and News

by David Hunter
Camp Property Manager

There are a great many plans for improvements at our camp properties in the coming months and years. The Camp Property Management Commit-



tee is listening to the Camping Program Committee and working with the Long Range Property Management Committee to update our plans and ensure that we are using our resources in the most effective manner we can.

By the time you read these lines I hope that the “Bear’s Den” at Catoctin will have a new roof. When we were inspecting the structures after camp we discovered that one half of the cabin looked like a busy shower room. The only things out of place were the desk and beds and the water was coming through the roof rather than from a fixture. We also hope that some improvements will be made to the well at Opequon that will help us reduce our winterization costs over the life of our lease.

You may have already heard that we completed two new cabins this summer, one at Opequon Quaker Camp and one at Catoctin Quaker Camp. They are the first of a number of cabins that need to be built over the coming years in order to satisfy the needs of a growing program and the state health department.

Work is almost completed in the basement of the caretakers house at Shiloh and in late winter or early spring of 2004 the Yearly Meeting will have a beautiful space that will be available for families, small groups, or committees to rent for retreats, intensive community building time or

simply for fellowship and fun. This will give us two winterized facilities that will be available to the Yearly Meeting and others all year — one at Catoctin and one at Shiloh.

This winter we are looking forward to implementing the Forestry Management Plan that was envisioned for Shiloh. The plan is designed to reduce fire dangers, increase habitat and food production for wildlife, and to improve the general health of our wooded lands. This year it will have the added benefit of producing some income for the Yearly Meeting.

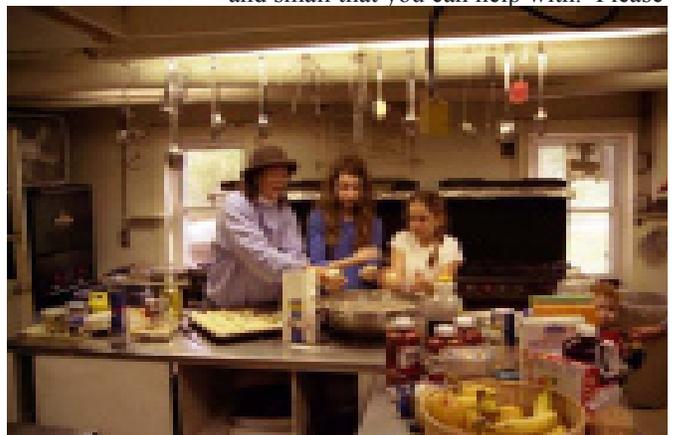
When spring begins to come to the mountains and valleys that cradle and uphold our camp properties, we will become at least as busy as the flora and fauna awakening around us! Projects that we hope to undertake in the spring include building another cabin at Catoctin to move us closer to being in compliance with Maryland Department of Health and Hygiene regulations and another cabin at Opequon to make space for our growing program. Opequon will also need some improvements to its infirmary, bathhouses and kitchen for camp to run more smoothly. Shiloh will not be left out of the excitement. It is time to roof some of the shelters and we continue to seek a way to expand the dining hall.

Extensive work has gone into assessing the needs of our properties for maintenance that has been deferred, major repairs that have been put off, and much needed improvements. But one piece of the puzzle is still missing. Our Yearly Meeting is in need

of more funds to be good stewards of the property that we have and to make the improvements that will help us maintain a reliable stream of revenue in the future. Our properties enable us to offer wonderful gifts to our young people and we are providing a model of nurture for youth that is not duplicated anywhere in the Quaker world. We are able to maintain and preserve beautiful, natural settings for our young people to learn what it is to live in the company of others that are committed to dwelling in Light and Love. What a blessing we have! What a gift we are giving!

How have our camping programs and properties enriched your life? Have you or those you love grown in the Light as a result of being a part of our camping program? Has the fellowship in your Monthly Meeting been deepened as a result of using the camp properties? How many lives have been touched by the outreach that our camping programs and camp properties provide? How many Friends have been gathered as a result of the commitment to young people we demonstrate by owning these properties and offering our programs? Do you rest a little more easily knowing that a small corner of creation is under the loving stewardship of your Yearly Meeting?

There are many projects both big and small that you can help with. Please



consider ways in which you can give of the resources that have been entrusted to you or services that you might be able to provide. We are developing a list of projects that need to be funded and would be happy to discuss ways in which you can

Thoughts and Notes from the Directors

- We had a couple of very memorable trips this summer including one which started on the mall in DC and another which started at a Keys game in Frederick and proceeded to come on the mountain and see how muddy they could get (what could be better for 13 year olds!!). (CQC)



- Our project week was less traditional this year and a big hit. We tried two new trips, bushwhacking—which was a challenge but exciting, and the art trip. Our survival trip took more food than usual, and found they were able to teach more (and starve less!). (CQC)

- We had a wonderful service trip with a day at Thorpewood, a day with Way Station and a day at the Red Wiggler Farm. I got to go to two of the three sites (as the bus driver) and loved being with the campers and at these wonderful sites. They harvested 26 pounds of kale at Red Wiggler which we drove to the Frederick Food Bank on the way home. (CQC)

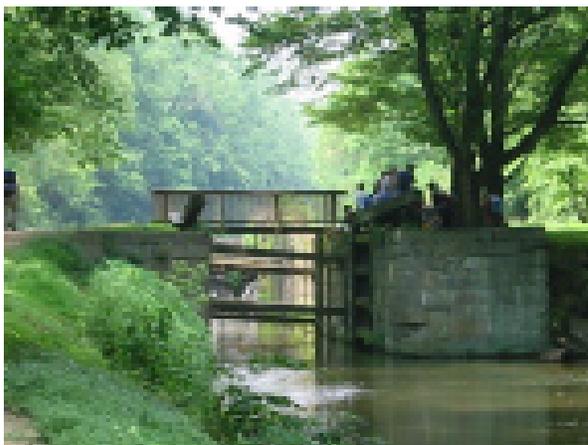
- We also developed relationships with two new places to do service projects. A group went to a grassfed beef farm (we also started buying our ground beef from there), and unit four did service work at a local rural Catholic Worker house. (SQC)

- Having so much rain during the first three weeks of camp made trip planning a challenge. Campers rose to the wet challenge. The rain provided some extremely exciting thunderstorms, for example, and a lot more sleeping bags to dry. On Teen Adventure, it rained

on most trips 22 out of the 23 days they were at camp! This had surprisingly little impact on TA enthusiasm and fun. Two out of six trips had to miss most of their canoe segment due to the flooding of the New River, but campers and counselors handled the loss of canoeing and addition of more hiking with grace and understanding. (TA)

- The start of the summer held the most incredible set of fire circles that I can remember in a long time. I added an invitation to share not only the crazy adventures, but also the moments of great peace or beauty. Many children spoke of moving, camper initiated single or small group meetings for worship in a beautiful spot. Children see so much beauty in the world! Our queries were well received as well. Our queries included the following: 1). What is the inner light? How do you let it shine through? 2). Where do you find God? What places or experiences help you experience that which is divine to you? 3). What are the building blocks of peace? 4). What is faith—how would you describe your faith to others? 5). How do you experience unconditional love? 6). What does it mean to walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone? (CQC)

- Campers participated well and widely in firecircle meetings for worship. Our final firecircle asked the campers what adventures they had and what they would bring



with them from camp. We heard answers that were funny, serious, reflective, boisterous, spiritual. Overall, campers and staff

Odds & Ends - please read!

• **Camper Address Lists:** This year I plan to **e-mail the camper address lists**. If you would like to receive it by postal mail, please call or e-mail and let Josh know.

• Want to live in an intentional community? **Common Ground** near Lexington, Virginia (where Teen Adventure is based each summer) is looking for new residents--especially families with children.

• Do you know anyone with **property along the Shenandoah River** who would be willing to let our camps camp on their property? We're always looking for good campsites.

• Could camp benefit from the **work you do in your professional life?** Let us know if you have a gift to share!

• Did you know there is a **BYM Camp Alumni Yahoo Listserv**? You could join! Contact Josh for more info.

• Have you looked at the **BYM Camping Program web** lately? There is a wealth of information there including historical information about the camps. Feel free to share photos and stories!

<http://www.bym-rsf.org/camping/>

• Does your child need **community service/volunteer hours?** Attending a camp work weekend is a great way to get hours and help camp. Call David!

• Do you have a concern about the camping programs? The **Camping Program Committee** meets nine times a year to consider program needs and issues. Would you like to **join** it? We are looking for a few more members.

• Have you experienced the power of the camping program? Why not acknowledge it with a **contribution**--and remember us in your will. It may be a long way off, but your children will benefit for a lifetime.

• Do you have **items in your basement** that could be useful to the camping programs that you'd like to donate? I suspect you do! Opequon is especially looking for photographic equipment.

• Is your **address information** updated? Do we have an **e-mail address** for you?

If any of the above has intrigued or inspired you, contact Josh Riley at the BYM office for more information. joshriley@bym-rsf.org or 301-774-7663.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Camping Programs
17100 Quaker Lane
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

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the firecircle is published yearly by the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. If you'd like to submit an article or have a comment, please direct it to joshirley@bym-rsf.org

You're Invited to a Camp Alumni Holiday Gathering!

Who: All former campers and current or former staff
When: Saturday, December 27, 2003
2:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Where: Sandy Spring Meeting Community House
17715 Meeting House Road
Sandy Spring, MD 20860
Bring: Appetizers, party food or dessert to share!

We will provide some munchies, hot cider and holiday cheer.

Please R.S.V.P. to joshirley@bym-rsf.org or janemegginson@bym-rsf.org or call the BYM office at 301-774-7663 or 800-962-4766.

Directions: <http://www.sandyspring.org/directions.html>

Spring Work Weekends

PLEASE COME!

April 23-25	Shiloh
May 2-4	Opequon
May 7-9	Catoctin and
May 7-9	Shiloh
May 21-23	Shiloh
May 28-30	Opequon
June 4-6	Catoctin
June 11-13	Catoctin

Come for the whole weekend or just on Saturday. Bring some food to share and we'll provide some too. Got skills? Great! Don't? No problem.

This schedule is always subject to change (usually cancellation) because of weather or contractor availability. Please always check the website before a weekend to make sure it is still happening.

<http://www.bym-rsf.org/camping/work.html>

